

# SMITHVILLE R-II SCHOOL DISTRICT

## PROGRAM AND DATA EVALUATION

### I. PROGRAM/DATA/ INFORMATION

Type of Program or Data: **Parents As Teachers (PAT)**

Month of Annual Review: **February 2025**

Evaluator Name: **Mary Kay Grusenmeyer**  
**Andrea Ambrosion**

Position: **Parents As Teachers Coordinator**  
**Director of Special Services**

### II. EVALUATION OF PROGRAM/DATA

Evaluative Criteria:

- 1) The PAT program follows current DESE guidelines requiring schools to provide all four components of the PAT Program: personal visits, annual developmental screenings, group connections, and resource connections.
- 2) The PAT program currently serves all interested parents of children birth to kindergarten entry.
- 3) Families are served in an appropriate manner according to DESE
  - a. Personal Visits
    - i. Offered every month
    - ii. Families meeting high needs criteria are offered more frequent visits
  - b. One developmental screening visit annually for children 3 months – 4 years old
- 4) Mass Developmental Screenings are offered to meet DESE's requirements
  - a. Early Childhood Screening – In partnership with the ECSE program, monthly screenings are conducted for children 3-5 years old
  - b. Day Care Screening – Annual screenings are offered for children 3 months to 4 years old. With parental consent, children are screened at their daycare facility. Currently, two Smithville daycare facilities participate.
  - c. Warrior Preschool Screening – children enrolled in the Warrior Preschool (not screened previously) are screened in August
  - d. Kindergarten Screening – Parent educators conference with parents after their child is screened. Strategies are offered to help them ensure their child's readiness for kindergarten.
  - e. Other screenings: moms participating in the Smithville MomCo group are offered screenings. Any family wanting their child to be screened can schedule a time to be screened by a parent educator.

#### **Summary of Parents As Teachers Program**

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a home-school-community partnership that supports parents in their role as their child's first and most influential teacher. Educators make monthly home visits with each family. Educators guide parents with a developmentally appropriate activity for each child at these meetings. Information is offered concerning the language, cognitive, social-emotional, and motor development of the child. Milestones are recorded after each visit to track appropriate development and note areas of concern. Additionally, families are offered developmental screenings each year. Various group connections are offered to help parents gain new insights into their child's development, get to know other parents, and have fun with their child.

**Missouri Research Project on Parents As Teachers’ Participation**

Missouri Parents As Teachers (PAT) Parent Education Program improves outcomes for young children. Research results indicate not only improved outcomes for children but also point to important cost savings for school districts through:

- increased likelihood of children receiving individualized education program services earlier
- improved attendance rates in grades K-3
- a decreased likelihood of students having to repeat grades

Children who received more PAT visits typically showed better outcomes than their peers who received fewer visits.

**STAFF:**

Mary Kay Grusenmeyer                      Full-Time Coordinator/Educator: 19 years  
 Shellie Crim                                      Part-Time Educator: 11 years  
 Kelley Huff                                      Part-Time Educator: 8 years  
 Kathy Mattke                                    Part-Time Educator: 4 years  
 Allyson Cunningham                      Part-Time Educator: 2 years  
 Maddie Duncan                                Part-Time Educator: 2 years

**Smithville R-II School District Statistical Reports  
 COMPONENT 1: PARENT EDUCATION**

PERSONAL VISITS											
SCHOOL YEAR	ALLOCATED FUNDS	ACTUAL FUNDS RECEIVED	HIGH NEEDS			NON-HIGH NEEDS			TOTAL		
			NUMBER OF FAMILIES	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	NUMBER OF VISITS	NUMBER OF FAMILIES	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	NUMBER OF VISITS	NUMBER OF FAMILIES	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	NUMBER OF VISITS
2021-2022	\$65,912.00	\$56,350.00	87	136	485	70	107	351	157	243	836
2022-2023	\$98,900.00	\$82,910.00	101	150	600	64	93	413	165	243	1013
2023-2024	\$98,900.00	\$108,010.00	99	150	721	97	145	616	196	295	1337
2024-2025	\$129,612.00	\$59,340.00	80	118	305	87	133	327	167	251	632

**NOTES:**

1. Beginning in 2022, the reimbursement rate increased: HN from \$80 to \$90, Non-HN \$50 to \$70
2. Additional funds were received based on the number of families served  
     2022-2023: \$150/family = \$24,750      2023-2024: \$125/family = \$24,500
3. 2024-2025 reflects personal visits made between 5/16/24 - 12/31/24

**COMPONENT 2: SCREENING**

SCHOOL YEAR	DESE ALLOCATED FUNDS	ACTUAL DESE FUNDS RECEIVED
2021-2022	\$15,150.00	\$12,330.00
2022-2023	\$24,650.00	\$23,850.00
2023-2024	\$24,650.00	\$26,450.00
2024-2025	\$29,095.00	\$8,650.00

**NOTES:**

1. Beginning in 2022, the reimbursement rate increased from \$30 to \$50 per screening
2. 2024-2025 reflects completed screenings as of 12/31/24

SCREENING TOTALS BY AGE								
	Under Age 1	Age 1	Age 2	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	TOTAL
<b>2021-2022</b>	55	63	67	65	64	102	2	418
Indicated Delay	5	11	15	40	20	30	0	121
<b>2022-2023</b>	34	79	78	101	71	114	0	477
Indicated Delay	9	26	18	20	19	20	0	112
<b>2023-2024</b>	51	62	89	113	122	88	4	529
Indicated Delay	14	17	15	29	29	11	1	106
<b>2024-2025</b>	14	21	28	64	43	3	0	145
Indicated Delay	4	10	6	25	22	2	0	69

**NOTES:**

1. 2024-2025
  - a. Incoming kindergarten students will be screened in April
  - b. New families and families with young babies will be screened by the end of the year
  - c. Six staff members share one vision screener, so not all children have had their vision screening this year
2. Children with indicated delays are:
  - a. Monitored by parent educators and parents are offered activities that focus on areas of concern
  - b. Referred to:
    - i. Missouri First Steps (younger than 3 years old) if their delay is at least 50% of their adjusted age
    - ii. Referred for District Early Childhood Screening (3 years old or older)
    - iii. Pediatrician if a concern with hearing is detected
    - iv. Vision professionals if vision screening detects an issue

**COMPONENT 3: GROUP CONNECTIONS**

The primary goal for group connections is to provide child development information to families in a setting encouraging them to network with other families with similarly aged children and discuss parenting issues. We strive to offer various opportunities that foster a child’s language, cognitive, social-emotional and motor development. The Parents as Teachers educators offer weekly/bi-weekly group connection activities to allow parents to play with their children, interact with other children and parents, ask questions about their child, and observe them in a group setting. Children are learning how to share, take turns, communicate their wants, express feelings in acceptable manners, and play cooperatively. Each activity concludes with a storytime featuring books, songs, and fingerplays. Participating in this structured time helps children develop skills that prepare them for the classroom: waiting their turn, sharing, sitting quietly, listening, and following directions.

An observation from a recent playgroup:

Two boys who attend Warrior Preschool, in different classes, attended playgroup. In prior conversations with their teachers and parent educators, I was aware that both were struggling in the school setting and were displaying many unacceptable behaviors (spitting, hitting, dumping toys, etc). Parent educators had been

helping parents develop strategies to teach their children appropriate behaviors. One boy was playing in the house area and one was playing with the trucks with his mom. He expressed an interest in having someone play with him. I suggested the other boy and told him his name. Mom reminded him to go to him and ask him if he wanted to play. He did, but there was no response. I suggested Mom tell him to gently tap him on the arm and say his name then wait for him to look at him and then ask him. He followed mom’s directions and the boys ended up playing together in the house area and then moved on to play with cars. We expect children to naturally understand the concept of sharing and taking turns and fail to spend the time teaching them the skill. This example is one of many that happen at our group connections.

<b>GROUP CONNECTIONS</b>				
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Percentage of Families participating in at least 1 Group Connection	47%	50%	51%	48%
Parent/Child Activities	20	30	31	36 planned
Parenting Class: Conscious Discipline	5 week session	5 week session	5 week session	5 week session
Parenting Class: Kindergarten Readiness			1 morning or evening session	1 morning or evening session

Parent/Child Activities: Playgroups, Music with Emily, Playtime at the Park, Art at the Creatarium Art Studio, Smithville Nature Center, Mommy and Me Yoga, Price Chopper Tour, Fire Safety at the Firestation, Nature Hike, Touch-A-Truck, and the Resource Fair

**NOTE:** Due to a surplus of state funds, districts that offered group connections were given additional funding.

2021-22: \$400 for 20 group connections - \$8,000

2022-23: \$400 for 23 group connections - \$9,200

2023-24: \$400 for a maximum of 12 group connections - \$4,800

#### **COMPONENT 4: RESOURCE CONNECTIONS**

- Community Activities – Library, soccer, t-ball
- Community Events – Haunted Campground, Santa at the Fire Station, Lighted Christmas Parade, Pack’s Hardware Activities
- Assistance with developmental concerns – Pediatricians, First Steps, Thompson Center, Children’s Mercy, The Child’s Spot
- Child care providers
- Help with financial needs – Warrior Closet, Food Bank, Christmas Store, Lion’s Club (glasses)
- Home Safety – free or low-cost childproofing equipment provided through Charlie’s House
- Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library - all children are eligible for free books each month

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Increased community awareness of the PAT program through articles in the Warrior Wire and the school district's social media posts.
- Using a QR code for families to enroll has streamlined the enrollment process.
- Offering hearing screenings with our new hearing machine
- Receiving extra funds from DESE for our group connections and administrative costs

## **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE PAT PROGRAM**

- Continue to offer PAT services to all interested families
- Continue to have a dedicated classroom for the Parents As Teachers Program

## **COMMENTS FROM OUR FAMILIES**

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the Parents As Teachers (PAT) program. As first-time parents, PAT has been an invaluable resource for us.

In today's digital age, navigating parenthood can feel overwhelming. The constant influx of information and differing opinions on child-rearing can be incredibly daunting. PAT provides a much-needed anchor. Our Parent Educator has been exceptional. Her in-home visits offered personalized guidance and practical advice tailored specifically to our child's development and our parenting style.

The program's focus on early childhood development and parent-child interaction is crucial. PAT has helped us understand the importance of these early years and how to best support our child's growth. We particularly appreciate the recent inclusion of postpartum depression and anxiety screenings. This proactive approach to parental mental health is vital and can significantly impact a family's well-being.

The flexibility of the program is a significant advantage. We especially value the weekend and evening activities, which accommodate our busy work schedules. The developmental screenings have also been incredibly helpful, providing valuable insights and early intervention when needed.

We wholeheartedly recommend the continuation and expansion of the PAT program within the Smithville R-II district. It is a valuable investment in the future of our children and a tremendous support system for families.

Our educator has been our family's PAT instructor for several years now. Our family absolutely adores her and we are so grateful for the PAT program.

There are two main things I find most comforting about the program. The first is that it is so helpful to see the clever games/activities she plans for our kids. I love an easy activity that we can make at home that the kids enjoy. The other is the importance of recognizing any delays or challenges a child may have and providing some resources or guidance as to where the parent should go from there.

The staff is always polite and friendly when participating in play groups. They do a great job of providing information and updates on the program and activities. It is obvious how much they love their job and that the children and the parents are their main focus.

PAT is one of the best programs for children from birth to five! The girls are knowledgeable, super nice, caring and genuinely love kids! They come to our houses which is a blessing on its own, instead of packing all their stuff and hauling them in and out of car seats. They arrive with good ideas, milestones and games appropriate for the age. These games are inexpensive and can be put together at home; along with books and activities to match. PAT is a world of information and learning! It's a super start for little ones, not to mention screening, plus it's their first interaction being in a classroom with others for routines and rules! I used them as a parent and am using them as

a grandparent, hopefully, I will be using them as a great-grandparent someday! Keep up the good work ladies, all of us involved are very lucky to have you!

PAT has been a wonderful resource for me as a mom and for my children. My oldest child, who is 4 and will be starting kindergarten next year, looks forward to our educator coming to our house. She loves to learn from her or practice a skill. She has not only taught my daughters new skills but she has also taught me how to handle certain situations when it comes to teaching my child or giving me advice on how to handle other hard situations that arise during motherhood. I have met the other PAT educators and they all are passionate about what they do and really care about the families they serve. PAT is a true asset to our community and young families. Thank you for providing us with such a great resource for free!

Parents as Teachers has been so beneficial to our kiddos! Our daughter has been in the program for a few years and looks forward to the visit every month and loves the activities that are completed. We gain great ideas to do with our kids that are developmentally appropriate and tips on how to help with their social-emotional development as well. The activities that are done with our oldest daughter have helped her continue to develop skills and knowledge that are necessary for kindergarten next year. We also enjoy the activities that PAT organizes each month for families to participate in. We have loved our experience with PAT and look forward to continuing the program with our son as well.

Our educator has been absolutely wonderful for our daughter. She has been with her since she was 2. She is always excited when she knows our educator will come visit. She has taught her and me great ways to learn at home using materials we have at home to learn different skills.

My child is very slow to warm up to others. When she was two, she was very cautious of anyone other than Mom or Dad interacting with her. The PAT educator has taught us how to navigate through this in a safe comfortable environment. The playgroups have really helped her social skills as well. She is now eager to play with friends and meet new people. She will talk to them immediately instead of shutting down. I'm so impressed by her growth.

We are so thankful for the Parents as Teachers program!

We love Parents as Teachers! Every day, we drop off my 1st grader and my 2-year-old points at the PAT office and will ask if we're going there today. I love how they have activities once a week to do that gets us out of the house. It's so nice having a playgroup once a week. Our PAT teacher is the sweetest. But honestly, they are all so amazing. I think what I love most about PAT is how much the educators ACTUALLY CARE and LOVE their jobs!!! You can just feel it. Especially during the Jolly Jamboree. Those women are so excited to be on stage having a real good time. I love that they're so passionate about what they do. I think that's so special. They're doing it because they actually want to be there. So happy to be a part of PAT!

Our family's Parents as Teachers educator has been such a blessing to our children. She worked with my 5th grade son, from ages 1-5 and currently does home visits with my 4-year-old daughter. She truly was one of the first people I talked to when we found out we were expecting to make sure we could start working together as soon as possible! She is always so cheerful and my kids love her. They look forward to her visits and can't wait to see what activities or books she will bring next. I could list several other things about the Parents as Teachers program that we value, but I think the personal connection that educators like SC, provide is priceless.

## **Parent Educator Success Stories Reported on the Year End Report 2023-24**

1. I've been with the family for 2 years now. I have had concerns about the child's development since the first visit, cautiously and continuously approaching mom about pulling in some resources to support the child and the family. The child had scored in the refer-on range on the ASQ and it recommended reaching out to First Steps. The family repeatedly declined the brochures and the offer of a referral. I continued to use the approach of advocating for the child in ways that might communicate best to him, pointing out areas of development that were on target and suggesting ways of pursuing help to support the child. Mom was polite but firm in declining help the entire first year of visits but would still let me come monthly. Towards

the beginning of this year, as the child turned 3, I suggested and signed the child up for the Early Childhood screening. The child qualified for services and mom hesitantly consented to pursuing support. I had many long conversations with mom about opportunities for the child to be in a learning environment where trained educators could try new ways of communicating with him. The child began attending the ECSE program 4 days a week. On my monthly visits, I began to notice drastic changes in his attention span, participation in activities, and an increase in speech. He was still excited to interact with the materials and activities I brought and seemed significantly more desirous of interaction and open to communication about the activities than the previous year, where he would engage in the material by himself in his own way, disregarding directions or intentions of the activity. I have seen a change in mom, too. Before, she had expressed concern about just needing to work with him more and recently, she is learning new ways of supporting his learning, and they seem to understand each other in greater measure and there is much more harmony in the home. His speech and language skills have significantly blossomed over the past few months and his mom has voiced a noticeable difference in the child's expressive and receptive language.

2. I have been serving this family for 7 years. When I began, mom was very young and her oldest child was a toddler. She and his father were estranged; she was living in a home with four generations and no one in the home held a job. Over the years, I supported her parenting practices and offered ways of playing with and being involved with her child's education and development. I was able to share information around all areas of health and development. I was able to offer research-based handouts on nutritious food and to recommend stopping giving the child Mountain Dew to help with what they suspected to be ADHD. During that time period, I had offered support as the mom considered filing for termination of paternal rights as dad was not paying child support and wasn't involved in his child's life. Slowly, the parents reconciled over a couple of years and became pregnant with the child I currently see, who turned three this year. I supported her prenatally at the same time her oldest was entering kindergarten. I have supported their family as they chose to get married and move out into their own house and as mom pursued a job and has steadily held employment for over 2 years. We have cycled through topics in the developmental-centered parenting and family well-being curriculum, discussing in detail things like budgeting, discipline, and ways to be involved in your child's education.
3. For two years, I have worked with a family with whom I have had concerns about the child's development since the first visit. Respectfully, I asked the mom about pulling in some resources to support the child and the family. Mom shared early on that her older son has autism and that she believed other family members might be undiagnosed as well. The child is nonverbal, except will yell or scream, will not make eye contact or respond to questions, and does not respond to dangerous situations such as traffic in the street or walking into a pond. When the child turned three, I signed the child up for the ECSE screening with the mom's permission. The child was unable to complete the screening. The district contacted the parent multiple times, inviting the child to come back to complete the ECSE screening. Mom shared she struggles with mental health and completing paperwork. I volunteered to take the paperwork to the family and help complete it, but the parents declined. In August of this past year, the parent agreed to sign the child up for the ECSE screening. The child completed the screening and qualified for the early childhood program. I was able to help and support the mom through enrollment and continue to share resources for the family.